

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of helping a consumer make a cosmetic product purchasing decision, the method comprising:

maintaining information reflective of compatibility between cosmetic products and personal characteristics of a plurality of subjects;

collecting personal characteristic information from the consumer;

comparing the consumer's collected personal characteristic information with the maintained compatibility information;

determining, based on the comparing, a compatibility level of the consumer with each of a plurality of the cosmetic products;

presenting to the consumer an indication of at least one of the plurality of cosmetic products; and

associating with the at least one presented product, an indicator of predicted compatibility between the at least one presented product and the consumer.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one presented product includes a list of cosmetic products.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the indicators associated with each product are numeric, and wherein the numeric indicators are displayed in a manner permitting the consumer to ascertain relative compatibility of multiple products.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the indicators associated with each product are symbols, and wherein the symbols are displayed in a manner permitting the consumer to ascertain relative compatibility of multiple products.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the indicators associated with each product include a graphical representation, and wherein the graphical representations are displayed in a manner permitting the consumer to ascertain relative compatibility of multiple products.

6. The method of claim 2, further comprising prompting the consumer to select at least one category of cosmetic products, and wherein a plurality of listed cosmetic products are selected to fall within the at least one category.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein personal characteristics of the subjects include at least one of physical characteristics, lifestyle information, and family history information.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein personal characteristic information of the consumer includes at least one of physical characteristics, lifestyle information, and family history information.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the maintained information is generated from at least one survey of cosmetic product users.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein collecting personal characteristic information from the consumer is accomplished through an electronic questionnaire.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein comparing includes identifying similarities between the collected personal information of the consumer and the personal characteristics of at least one of the subjects.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein identifying similarities is accomplished using an artificial intelligence engine.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein at least some of the plurality of the cosmetic products are pre-selected by the consumer.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein none of the plurality of cosmetic products are pre-selected by the consumer.

15. The method of claim 2, wherein the list includes pricing information associated with each product.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the list is sorted based on at least one of a group of criteria, the group of criteria including level of projected compatibility with the consumer, price, consumer brand preferences, accessibility of products, personal reaction to ingredients, ethical guideline preferences, country of manufacture, whether product is natural, and proven effectiveness.

17. The method of claim 2, performed over a network, wherein presenting includes causing the list to be presented on a display device at a location of the consumer.

18. A method of helping a consumer make a cosmetic purchasing decision, the method comprising:

maintaining information about compatibility between cosmetic products and personal characteristics of a plurality of subjects;

collecting personal characteristic information from the consumer;

comparing the consumer's collected personal characteristic information with the maintained compatibility information;

based on comparing, determining a compatibility level of the consumer with at least one of the cosmetic products;

displaying a representation of the at least one cosmetic product; and

associating with the representation an indicator of compatibility between the at least one cosmetic product and the consumer.

19. The method of claim 18, further comprising presenting to the consumer a menu of cosmetic products, and prompting the consumer to select the at least one cosmetic product from the menu.

20. The method of claim 18, further comprising prompting the consumer to identify a preference for at least one category of cosmetic products, and wherein during comparing, information is processed on a plurality of products within the at least one category and a subset of cosmetic products from the at least one category are selected for display.

21. The method of claim 18, wherein representations of only consumer-selected cosmetic products are displayed.

22. The method of claim 18, wherein alternatives to consumer-selected cosmetic products are displayed.

23. A method of classifying cosmetic products, the method comprising:

maintaining in a data structure information based on the use of a plurality of cosmetic products by a plurality of subjects having varying personal characteristics;

maintaining in the data structure information reflective of at least some of the personal characteristics of the subjects;

maintaining in the data structure information reflective of a degree of compatibility between at least some of the cosmetic products and the personal characteristics of at least some of the subjects;

prompting a consumer to provide personal information reflective of the consumer's own personal characteristics;

comparing the personal information provided by the consumer with the personal characteristics information contained in the data structure; and

causing at least some of the plurality of cosmetic products to be classified by a predicted degree of compatibility with the consumer.

24. The method of claim 23, further comprising displaying to the consumer cosmetics products above a predetermined compatibility classification.

25. The method of claim 23, wherein causing products to be classified includes generating an affinity index for each of the plurality of cosmetic products.

26. The method of claim 23, wherein personal characteristics of the subjects and the consumer include at least one of physical characteristics, lifestyle information, and family history information.

27. The method of claim 23, wherein compatibility includes at least one of aesthetic compatibility with the consumer's appearance and physical compatibility with the consumer's biology.

28. A method of prescribing cosmetic products, the method comprising:

- maintaining in a data structure information based on the use of a plurality of cosmetic products by a plurality of subjects having varying personal characteristics;
- maintaining in the data structure information reflective of at least some of the personal characteristics of the subjects;
- maintaining in the data structure information reflective of a degree of compatibility between at least some of the cosmetic products and the personal characteristics of at least some of the subjects;
- prompting a consumer to provide personal information reflective of the consumer's own personal characteristics;
- comparing the personal information provided by the consumer with the personal characteristics information contained in the data structure; and
- causing a display to the consumer of representations of at least some of the plurality of cosmetic products prioritized by degree of predicted compatibility with the consumer.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein the display to the consumer includes a list of products, arranged in order of predicted compatibility.

30. The method of claim 28, wherein the display to the consumer includes one or more of a code, an indicator, or a ranking associated with one or more displayed representations of cosmetic products.

31. The method of claim 28, wherein a ranking and a purchase price are associated with each displayed product representation.

32. The method of claim 28, wherein the plurality of cosmetic products include products of differing brands.

33. The method of claim 32, further comprising causing a display to the consumer of a plurality of recommendations arranged by category.

34. The method of claim 33, wherein the category includes at least one a level of projected compatibility with the consumer, price, consumer brand preferences, accessibility of products, personal reaction to ingredients, ethical guideline preferences, country of manufacture, whether product is natural, and proven effectiveness.

35. The method of claim 28, wherein prompting the consumer to provide personal information includes prompting the consumer to identify a preferred brand of cosmetic product, and wherein at least one of the plurality of recommendations is a recommendation based on the consumer's preferred brand.

36. The method of claim 28, wherein prompting the consumer to provide personal information includes prompting the consumer to identify purchase price preferences, and wherein at least one of the plurality of recommendations is a recommendation based on the consumer's purchase price preferences.

37. A system for helping a consumer select a cosmetic product, the system comprising:

a data structure containing information about personal characteristics of a plurality of test subjects, the data structure further containing information reflective of a degree of compatibility between at least some of the cosmetic products and the physical characteristics of at least some of the subjects;

memory for at least temporarily storing information reflective of the consumer's own personal characteristics; and

a processor for comparing the personal characteristic information provided by the consumer with compatibility information contained in the data structure and for associating with at least one of the plurality of cosmetic products a classifier indicating a degree of compatibility between the at least one product and the consumer.

38. The system of claim 37, wherein personal characteristics of the subjects include at least one of physical characteristics, lifestyle information, and family history information.

39. The system of claim 37, wherein personal characteristic information of the consumer include at least one of physical characteristics, lifestyle information, and family history information.

40. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for causing a computer to perform a method of helping a consumer make a cosmetic product purchasing decision, the method comprising:

maintaining information reflective of compatibility between cosmetic products and personal characteristics of a plurality of subjects;

collecting personal characteristic information from the consumer;

comparing the consumer's collected personal characteristic information with the maintained compatibility information;

based on comparing, determining a compatibility level of the consumer with each of a plurality of the cosmetic products;

presenting to the consumer an indication of at least one of the plurality of cosmetic products; and

associating with the at least one presented product, an indicator of predicted compatibility between the at least one presented product and the consumer.

41. The computer-readable medium of claim 40, wherein the at least one presented product includes a list of cosmetic products.

42. The computer-readable medium of claim 40, wherein the indicators associated with each product are numeric, and wherein the numeric indicators are displayed in a manner permitting the consumer to ascertain relative compatibility of multiple products.

43. The computer-readable medium of claim 40, wherein the indicators associated with each product are symbols, and wherein the symbols are displayed in a manner permitting the consumer to ascertain relative compatibility of multiple products.

44. The computer-readable medium of claim 40, wherein the indicators associated with each product include a graphical representation, and wherein the graphical representations are displayed in a manner permitting the consumer to ascertain relative compatibility of multiple products.

45. The computer-readable medium of claim 41, further comprising prompting the consumer to select at least one category of cosmetic products, and wherein cosmetic products on the list are selected to fall within the at least one category.

46. The computer-readable medium of claim 40, wherein personal characteristics of the subjects include at least one of physical characteristics, lifestyle information, and family history information.

47. The computer-readable medium of claim 40, wherein personal characteristic information of the consumer includes at least one of physical characteristics, lifestyle information, and family history information.

48. The computer-readable medium of claim 40, wherein the maintained information is generated from at least one survey of cosmetic product users.

49. The computer-readable medium of claim 40, wherein collecting personal characteristic information from the consumer is accomplished through an electronic questionnaire.

50. The computer-readable medium of claim 40, wherein comparing includes identifying similarities between the collected personal information of the consumer and the personal characteristics of at least one of the subjects.

51. The computer-readable medium of claim 50, wherein identifying similarities is accomplished using an artificial intelligence engine.

52. The computer-readable medium of claim 40, wherein at least some of the plurality of the cosmetic products are pre-selected by the consumer.

53. The computer-readable medium of claim 40, wherein none of the plurality of cosmetic products are pre-selected by the consumer.

54. The computer-readable medium of claim 41, wherein the list includes pricing information associated with each product.

55. The computer-readable medium of claim 54, wherein the list is sorted from greatest compatibility to least compatibility.

56. A method of helping a consumer make a cosmetic product purchasing decision, the method comprising:

receiving, from a cosmetic service, a request for personal information from the consumer, the personal information including at least one of personal characteristic information and preference information;

sending the personal information to the cosmetic service, wherein the cosmetic service compares the consumer's personal characteristic information with information reflective of compatibility between cosmetic products and personal characteristics of a plurality of subjects, determines a compatibility level of the consumer with each of a plurality of the cosmetic products, and associates with at least one of the cosmetic products, an indicator of predicted compatibility between the at least one cosmetic product and the consumer;

receiving the indicator of predicted compatibility from the cosmetic service;
and

displaying the indicator of predicted compatibility with an indication of the at least one cosmetic product.

57. An apparatus for helping a consumer make a cosmetic product purchasing decision, comprising:

a memory including a program that: maintains information reflective of compatibility between cosmetic products and personal characteristics of a plurality of subjects; collects personal characteristic information from the consumer; compares the consumer's collected personal characteristic information with the maintained compatibility information; determines, based on the comparing, a compatibility level of the consumer with each of a plurality of the cosmetic products; presents to the consumer an indication of at least one of the plurality of cosmetic products; and associates with the at least one presented product, an indicator of predicted compatibility between the at least one presented product and the consumer; and

a processor that runs the program.

58. An apparatus for helping a consumer make a cosmetic product purchasing decision, comprising:

means for maintaining information reflective of compatibility between cosmetic products and personal characteristics of a plurality of subjects;

means for collecting personal characteristic information from the consumer;

means for comparing the consumer's collected personal characteristic information with the maintained compatibility information;

means for determining, based on the comparing, a compatibility level of the consumer with each of a plurality of the cosmetic products;

means for presenting to the consumer an indication of at least one of the plurality of cosmetic products; and

means for associating with the at least one presented product, an indicator of predicted compatibility between the at least one presented product and the consumer.

59. An apparatus for helping a consumer make a cosmetic product purchasing decision, comprising:

a memory including a program that: receives, from a cosmetic service, a request for personal information from the consumer, the personal information including at least one of personal characteristic information and preference information; sends the personal information to the cosmetic service, wherein the cosmetic service compares the consumer's personal characteristic information with information reflective of compatibility between cosmetic products and personal characteristics of a plurality of subjects, determines a compatibility level of the consumer with each of a plurality of the cosmetic products, and associates with at least one of the cosmetic products, an indicator of predicted compatibility between the at least one cosmetic product and the consumer; receives the indicator of predicted compatibility from the cosmetic service; and displays the indicator of predicted compatibility with an indication of the at least one cosmetic product; and

a processor that runs the program.